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BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
CALIFORNIA DISTRICT
CENTRAL LIBRARY

BIZZ JOHNSON RAILTRAIL



USDI Bureau of Land
Management
Susanville District

USDA Forest Service
Lassen National Forest

~~LIBRARY REFERENCE ONLY~~



● Welcome to the Bizz Johnson Trail!

Following the old Fernley and Lassen Branch Line of the Southern Pacific Railroad, the trail winds 25.4 miles from Susanville to Mason Station. The trail then follows existing roads an additional 4.5 miles into Westwood where a railroad station type kiosk and a 25-foot carved redwood statue of Paul Bunyan mark the Westwood trailhead.

Most of the trail traverses the rugged Susan River Canyon with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains and reminders of the railroad and logging days of the past. The entire grade is usable as a hiking and equestrian trail. Horseback riders, hikers, joggers, and mountain bicyclists use the trail. In the snowy winter months, cross-country skiers and snowmobilers can be seen traveling its length.

● Bizz Johnson

The trail is named in the honor of former Congressman Harold T. "Bizz" Johnson who served in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1958 to 1980. Congressman Johnson was instrumental in the successful establishment of this rails to trails project. The BLM Susanville District and Lassen National Forest now jointly manage the Bizz Johnson Trail.

• Fernley and Lassen Railroad



Built in 1914 to service the newly developed logging community of Westwood, the Fernley and Lassen Railroad was heavily used to haul logs, ship milled lumber, and transport passengers for over 40 years. Operated by Central Pacific, and later by Southern Pacific, the railroad provided the essential link between the Westwood mill in Lassen County, California, and the railroad's main line in Fernley, Nevada. From Fernley, the milled lumber products were shipped to markets throughout the country and around the world.

With changing economic conditions the Westwood Mill gradually declined leading to the eventual demise of the railroad. The last trains operated on the Fernley and Lassen branch line in 1956. For 20 years the railroad lay unused and uncared for.

In 1978, Southern Pacific, the railroad owner received approval to legally abandon the unused line. The Bureau of Land Management, with the support of the U.S. Forest Service and many community groups then initiated the rails to trails conversion. Thirty scenic miles of the old railroad between Susanville and Westwood are now the historic Bizz Johnson Rail Trail.

• Rails to Trails



The Bizz Johnson Trail, like the Fernley and Lassen Branch Line, continues to contribute to the well-being of the communities it serves. As the railroad was a transportation link between Susanville and Westwood, the trail now links the towns recreationally.

Local residents enjoy the scenic beauty and convenient access that the trail provides along the Susan River Canyon and through the forested woodlands. And as the railroad once linked Lassen County with outside markets, the Bizz Johnson Trail now links Lassen County with a large population of trail enthusiasts — hikers, cyclists, horseback riders, cross country skiers, as well

as sportsmen and railroad history buffs. Based on their trails interests many people now travel to Lassen County to explore and enjoy the Bizz Johnson Trail.

At its peak in the 1930's the Paul Bunyan Lumber Company of Westwood operated the largest pine mill in the world. The booming era of Westwood and the Paul Bunyan Lumber Company can now be revisited. The Westwood trailhead's railroad station kiosk, the nearby 25 foot carved redwood statue of Paul Bunyan and the interpretive displays of the Westwood museum bring to life the bygone era when the woods and the town of Westwood bustled with the sounds and activities of logging and railroading. The western half of the Fernley and Lassen Branch line was alive with logging camps, spur lines and switching stations. These features can now be seen along the trail marked by replicas of station signs and explained through interpretive signs.

● Hiking



If you plan to hike the trail, you will find the 18-mile segment along the Susan River from Westwood Junction to Susanville most scenic because of the variety afforded by the adjacent river and canyon. It is an easy hike with maximum 3 percent grade.

A variety of day hikes are possible from the many trailheads shown on the map. By arranging your own shuttle between trailheads, hikers can enjoy more of the trail without backtracking. Backpacking is also an activity that can be enjoyed on the trail. The water sources found along the trail are not safe for drinking. Drinking water should be packed in or treated.

● Equestrian



Horseback riding is a wonderful pastime along the trail. Eleven bridges and two tunnels, 450 and 800 feet are passable on horseback. If you wish to avoid the tunnels, riverside trails provide alternate routes.

● Bicycling



Bicycling on the Bizz Johnson Trail is best enjoyed on wide-tired bicycles. Multigeared mountain bicycles are excellent for trail use, however, single-speed wide-tired bicycles are also suitable.

The trail surface consists of a relatively level railroad grade (3 percent maximum) composed of aggregate material. Wide-tired bicycles can easily travel the entire trail. Caution should be exercised when crossing planking on decked bridges and when traveling through unlighted tunnels.

● Cross-country Skiing



The best areas for cross-country skiing are on the trail's upper 18.5-mile segment, located west of Highway 36 (Devils Corral area). Elevations from 4,760 feet to 5,500 feet, northern exposures, and shading combine to provide the most reliable snow conditions. A recommended trail segment for cross-country combines road skiing from Highway 44 to Goumaz (3 miles) with trail skiing from Goumaz to Highway 36. This 9-mile segment affords a gentle downhill slope with good views of the Susan River and Diamond Mountain. To avoid backtracking, a shuttle is recommended for all trail segments.

The lower 7 miles of trail from Highway 36 east to Susanville are skiable following major snowfall, but snow conditions deteriorate rapidly on this section due to lower elevations and open southern exposures. Also, two tunnels (800 and 450 feet respectively) require walking.

The best public access areas are at Mason Station near Westwood, Highway 44 near Hog Flat Reservoir, Highway 36 near Devils Corral, and Hobo Camp near Susanville. **Before beginning a cross-country skiing expedition, check local weather conditions and use caution.**

● Fishing



Fishing in the Susan River is best in spring to early summer. The river provides habitat for native rainbow and brown trout, speckled dace, redbreast shiner, and common sucker. Annually the California Department of Fish and Game plant 4,000 seven to nine inch rainbow trout in the lower Susan River between Susanville and Devils Corral. These fish stockings occur at seven sites bi-monthly in May, June, and July. Generally stocking of fish ends around July when river temperature peaks reach 70 to 75 degrees F.



**Bureau of Land Management
Eagle Lake Resource Area
2545 Riverside Drive
Susanville, CA 96130
916/257-5381**



**Lassen National Forest
Eagle Lake Ranger District
55 So. Sacramento Street
Susanville, CA 96130
916/257-2151**

R 9 E

R 10 E

R 11 E

R 12 E

BLM Library
Denver Federal Center
Bldg. 85, OC-521
P.O. Box 25047
Denver, CO 80225

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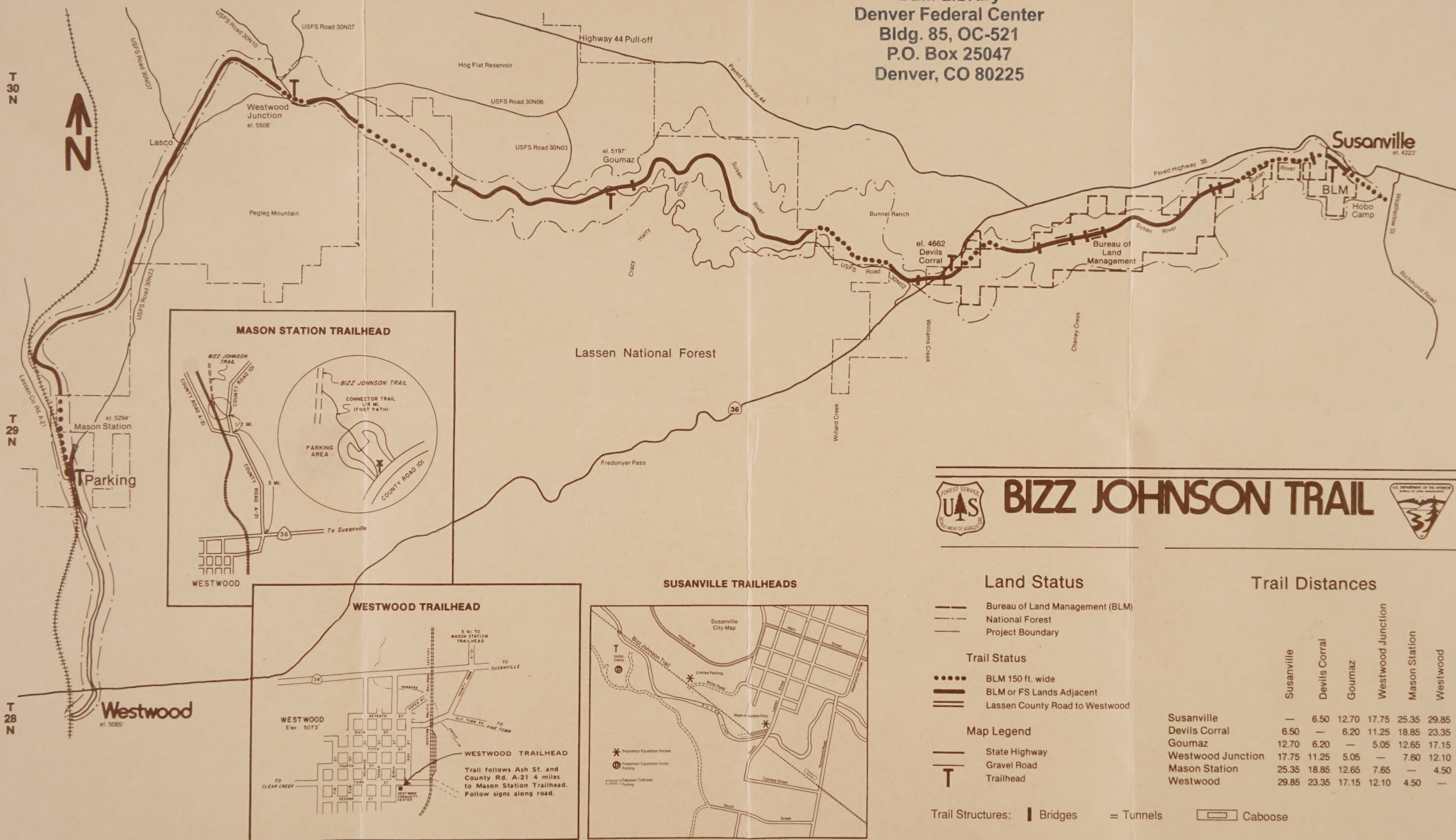
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- Trash**
 What you pack in, pack out! Do not bury or burn your noncombustible trash, as this can create a mess. Animals often uncover buried trash and scatter it. When you can, try to pick up what others have left. We can keep the trail beautiful if we leave the area cleaner than we find it!
- Sanitation**
 Do not use soap or detergents in or around the river. Carry water from the river to wash dishes and yourself. For human waste, dig a hole six to eight inches deep, located more than 100 feet from the water or trail. Cover all waste and toilet paper with soil.
- Water**
 Drinking water from the river should be boiled or treated, due to cattle and stock using the river upstream. Springs in the area have not been tested and water from these should be treated also.
- Private Land**
 Some sections of the trail are bordered by private property. Obey signs and stay on the trail in these areas. Respect the rights of private landowners.
- Trail Courtesy**
 Share the Trail. Bicyclists yield to walkers and walkers and bicyclists yield to horseback riders. When overtaking another trail user, let them know you are approaching so you do not startle them and/or their horse.

- Trail Use Regulations**
 To protect natural resources, and provide a safe recreation experience for all, the following regulations are in effect along the trail:
 - Vehicles**
 Motorized vehicles are prohibited on the trail between Susanville and the last Susan River crossing (2.4 miles west of Goumaz). Snowmobiles are allowed west of Devils Corral. All vehicles are prohibited from travel along or in the Susan River Channel.
 - Firearms**
 Firearms discharge is prohibited on or across the trail and at all trailheads. Hunting is allowed under county and state codes off the trail. Caution is advised. Usually other trail users are in the canyon also!
 - Camping**
 Camping is allowed along the trail on BLM and U.S. Forest Service land. There is a seven-day limit per trail segment. The U.S. Forest Service has an undeveloped drive-in camping area at Goumaz. No camping is allowed at Hobo Camp or Devils Corral trailheads.
 - Campfires**
 Permits are required and can be obtained from the Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Forest Service, or the California Department of Forestry. Build fires in designated fire safe areas only. Seasonal fire restrictions may apply.

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